

# **Bhagavad Gita**

**Religion 840:358 Spring 2015**

4th period on the Douglass Campus, 2:15-3:35PM.

Instructor: Edwin Bryant.

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Office Hours: 12.00 – 1.00 PM, Loree 108, Douglass Campus

The primary purpose of this course is to carefully study the Gita in its entirety. Additional readings on the Gita will discuss its reception in the Western world, and examine the background and orientations of some of its principal modern Hindu commentators. Consequently, we should gain some sense of the liberties taken by exegetes in the utilization of this very important text for the promotion of their various philosophical or social, etc, points of view.

**Course requirements:** All assigned reading. Students are expected to read the entire chapter assigned for each particular week, **along with both commentaries** and be prepared to discuss these in class. A one page discussion paper is due each week for each Gita chapter responding to a given question on that chapter reflecting a thorough reading of the material (late papers will be penalized). A mid-term quiz (20% of the total grade), final cumulative quiz (40%), and term paper (8-10 pgs, 30%) due the last day of class. In addition to this, students will be assigned class presentations on the secondary reading, and their attendance record, response papers and overall performance in class will factor into the remaining 10% of the grade. **No make-ups for missed exams will be given without valid medical proof or a signed letter from a student dean.**

The written exams will consist of short answer questions testing the students' mastery over the information covered in the course, as well as mini-essay questions testing their insights and more in-depth understanding of the material. Essential Sanskrit terms will also be on the exams. The final paper gives students an opportunity to probe and research in more detail any particular aspect of 'Hinduism' connected or connectable to the Gita that has captured their interest.

## **Grading:**

A = 100-90 B+ = 89-87; B = 86-80; C+ = 79-77; C = 76-70; D = 69-65; F = 64 and below. Please note that outstanding class participation can make all the difference between grades

## **Required Course Books:**

Smith, John.d. The Mahabharata. London: Penguin, 2009.

Sharpe, Eric. The Universal Gita. La Salle: Open Court Publishing, 1985.

Davis, Richard The Bhagavad Gita: a Bibliography Princeton, 2014.

Srimad Bhaktivedanta Narayana Maharaja Srimad Bhagavad Gita Gaudiya Vedanta Samiti, 2000 Available for free download at:

<http://www.purebhakti.com/resources/ebooks-a-magazines-mainmenu-63/bhakti-books/english.html>

## **Sakai:**

Van Buitenen, 39-69 The Bhagavad Gita in the Mahabharata. Chicago: University of

Chicago 1981

**Tue Jan 20th: Introduction**

**Thur Jan 22nd: Mahabharata**

*Readings:*

Mahabharata, 1-3.

**Tue Jan 27th: Mahabharata**

*Readings:*

Mahabharata, 4-6.

**Thur Jan 29th: Mahabharata**

*Readings:* Mahabharata, 7-9.

**Tue Feb 3rd Gita Mahabharata**

*Readings:* Mahabharata, 10-12.

**Thur Feb 5th: Mahabharata**

*Readings:* Mahabharata, 13-15.

**Tue Feb 10th: Mahabharata**

*Readings:* Mahabharata, 16-18.

**Thur Feb 12th**

*Readings:*

**Tue Feb 17th: Gita, Chapter 1.**

*Readings:* Van Buitenen, 39-69

**Thur Feb 19th: Gita, Chapter 2.**

*Readings:* Sharpe, Introduction and Chap I: "The First Translation." pp ix - 15.

**Tue Feb 24th: Gita, Chapter 2 (cont).**

*Readings:* Sharpe, Chap II: "Romantics and Transcendentalists." 15-31.

**Thur Feb 26th: Gita, Chapter 3**

*Readings:* Chap III: "Missionaries and Mystics." pp. 32-46.

**Tues March 3rd: Gita, Chapter 4.**

*Readings:* Chap IV: "Theories of Origins." pp. 47-63.

**Thur March 5th: Gita, Chapter 5.**

*Readings:* Sharpe, Chap V: "RennTaissance, Radicalism and Theosophy." pp. 67-102

**Tues March 10th: Gita, Chapter 6.**

*Readings:* Chap VI: "Gandhi's Gita." pp. 103-123.

**Thur March 12th: Mid-Term QUIZ.**

**Tue March 17th & Thur March 19th: Spring Break**

**Tue March 24th: Gita, Chapter 7**

*Readings:* Chap VII: "Rudolf Otto, J.W. Hauer and T.S. Eliot." pp. 123-135.

**Thur March 26th: Gita, Chapter 8**

*Readings:* Chap VIII: "The Gita and the Counter-Culture." pp. 136-147.

**Tues March 31st: Gita, Chapter 9**

*Readings:* Sharpe, Chap IX: "Ethical Monotheism and Social Caste." pp. 148-175.

**Thur April 2nd: Gita, Chapter 10-11**

*Readings:* Davis, Chap 1: "The *Bhagavad Gita* in the Time of its Composition."

**Tues April 7th: Gita, Chapter 12**

*Readings:* Davis, Chap 2 "Krishna and His *Gita* in Medieval India."

**Thur April 9th: Gita, Chapter 13**

*Readings:* Davis, Chap 3 "Passages from India."

**Tues April 14th: Gita, Chapter 14**

*Readings:* Davis, Chap 4 "Krishna, The *Gita* and the Indian Nation."

**Thur April 16th: Gita, Chapter 15**

*Readings:* Davis, Chap 5 "Modern *Gita* Translations."

**Tues April 21st: Gita, Chapter 16**

*Readings:* Davis, Chap 6 “The *Bhagavad Gita* in Great Time.”

**Thur April 23rd: Gita, Chapters 17 & 18.1-49**

*Readings:* To be determined

**Tues April 28th: Gita, Chapter 18 (cont)**

*Readings:* To be determined

**Thur April 30th:**

**Final Quiz; All Papers Due**